Atalanta Owners Association

2018- 2019

60th Annual Bulletin

Atalanta Owners' Association

2018 - 2019 Bulletin

Contents

Front cover photograph: Bill Kenoway

Message from the Commodore

It's late November as I write and I've just returned from the Orwell Yacht Club on the River Orwell at Ipswich, where hardy volunteers were hauling out boats for the winter. Other members were well muffled up and undertaking last minute lay-up jobs on their boats.

One member I was chatting to though, was rubbing his hands with glee as he relished winter sailing in the wide open spaces without the "summer clutter" as he elegantly put it!

But the majority of sailors were laying up their boats and retiring into the warm comfort of their homes – to plan for next season. So I make no apologies for returning to a recurring theme of mine – this is your Association, and the Committee can only organise those events that you want us to organise.

We get little feedback and have no real idea whether our planned events are what you want or not. And following on from this, it is disheartening for those volunteers organising events, when members don't respond – one way or the other - in a timely manner. The volunteer efforts that are made to plan and organise events on your behalf are nothing short of amazing; all they ask for is recognition, and the best recognition is for members to respond – at least they'll then know that there are members out there.

So please – when you are notified of events, please respond straight away and even a "not sure" or "maybe" is better than nothing.

To those of you on the other side of the world – have a great season! To those of you who have laid up – also have a great season and make those plans for next year.

Very best wishes,

Mike Dixon, Commodore A1 "Atalanta"

Message from the Editor

It does seem strange to think that I have been editing this Bulletin for the last 10 years. I am afraid that this 60th anniversary (of the formation of the AOA) Bulletin will be my last as Hon Editor.

I am proud to be able to look back on the changes that I have been able to make as editor, the most significant of which is to incorporate colour photographs throughout the document. Initially that involved Dinah and I in weeks of hard work actually printing the pages, stapling them together and trimming them ourselves. Technological change in the small scale printing industry has been rapid during those 10 years, and we are now able to get the Bulletin and the Yearbook printed professionally for a few hundred pounds. This has made the few copies that this association requires viable.

So with some regret I feel that it is an appropriate time for someone else to take over. I shall of course continue as a member, and from now on will look forward to the postman bringing another Bulletin for me to read!

Trevor Thompson
Hon Bulletin Editor

Some Observations on Stern Gear

by Mike Dixon, A1 Atalanta

By stern gear I include the stern tube, the propeller and the propeller shaft and the various fittings that join it all together.

The following stems from the upgrade of the engine on A1 and lengthy discussions with the manufacturers of the stern gear. As a result of the engine upgrade, the existing stern gear was way too small and needed upgrading. I'm not an engineer so it was essential to get solid impartial advice. I went to the London Boat Show earlier in 2017 and more or less chose a suitable engine. Then in September 2017, I placed an order for the engine and took lots of advice from the various manufacturers of both engines and stern gear. Some of what follows is obvious, some of it not – but all of it relevant. Incidentally, I make no apologies for using old measurements – for some peculiar quirk, stern gear measurements are still largely calculated using "old money".

Boring bar with tapered guides

Deadwood bored

1. The sizing of the propeller shaft will be determined by the engine's horse power, maximum revolutions of the shaft (i.e. gearbox ratio will be needed) and the length of the shaft between bearings. For instance, the shaft diameter for my set up came out at ¾" – until the distance between bearings (5'8" in my case) was taken into account, which because of that length, meant the diameter had to be beefed up to 1". It was felt that there was a real risk of the shaft whipping if it were not the larger diameter.

2. The bearings are, at the engine end a conventional stuffing box arrangement, and at the propeller end a cutlass bearing. I was (very easily) persuaded against a more hi-tech solution for the inboard end.

3. The diameter of the shaft and the diameter of the bearings will then determine the internal and external diameters of the stern tube. In my case the stern tube's external diameter

comes out at 1 ½”.

4. Which is a problem! The existing hole for the stern tube is only 1 5/16” and will need boring out (to 1 11/16”) to accept the new stern tube.

5. The stern tube will have bronze castings at either end, one casting at the inboard end for the stuffing box, and a second casting housing the cutlass bearing at the propeller end. Each of these castings will be fixed rigidly to the deadwood, thus settling the stern tube firmly in place.

6. The size of the propeller will be determined according to engine horse power and maximum revs. The calculation for my set up came out at a three bladed propeller 13” x 8” – 13” being the swept diameter of the propeller and the 8” being the pitch – the theoretical distance the boat will travel with one complete revolution of the propeller. Which is problem number two! There simply isn’t enough hull clearance for a propeller of this diameter. So I will be ending up with a slight compromise and a three bladed propeller of 10” x 12”.

Trying the stuffing box fit

Boring guide in the deadwood

7. But this is not the end of the calculating; to prevent undue vibration, not to say horrendous noise in the aft cabin, the minimum tip clearance of the propeller ought to be not less than 15% of the propeller’s diameter. I’m getting a 10” diameter propeller, so there must be 1½” clearance between the tip of the propeller blades and the underside of the hull. Incidentally, apart from the noise and vibration, having this minimum clearance improves the propeller’s efficiency no end.

8. The amount of the propeller shaft sticking out from the aft end of the cutlass bearing bronze casting also matters, if the shaft isn’t going to whip, vibrate and make a lot of noise. The absolute maximum length of shaft showing between the for’d face of the propeller boss and the aft face of the cutlass bearing casting, is twice the shaft diameter, but it is reckoned that the length of bare shaft ought not to be more than the diameter of the

shaft. Which, coupled with the tip clearance issue noted above, gives me problem number three!

9. So, given a propeller diameter of 10", a tip clearance of 1½", bare shaft of no more than 1" and the shape of the hull relative to the shaft and deadwood, means that I will have to lengthen the deadwood so that the propeller moves further aft whilst still being adequately supported. Some of the extra distance will be taken care of by the length of the cutlass bearing casting, but the deadwood will have to be extended by 3".

Trying the engine for size

10. The engine end of the shaft will have a standard semi-flexible coupling. I thought that the shaft could be cut once the rest of the stern gear and the engine were installed. Not so! Apparently, when the shaft is cut to length, a slight bend will be induced. If this is not corrected, the shaft is on a loser from the beginning as it will develop a whip and vibrate horribly. So the length is determined, the cut made and then the shaft straightened before being installed. And yes, it will make a difference.

11. The length of shaft between the stuffing box casting (at the for'd end of the stern tube) and the engine coupling is not critical (provided it's not a huge gap). In my case, the length of shaft is about 1'6".

Does all this matter? If you have the wrong sized propeller, lousy tip clearance and a long length of exposed shaft between the stern tube and the propeller, your boat will still go when all is said and done. So the last thing I'm suggesting is that you should go out and change your installation. It's just that I have the opportunity of doing it right; Apart from solving a few problems, it's not going to cost me extra, so in my mind it's worth while doing it. Wish me luck!

Engine Problems: A Cautionary Tale

by Richard Hall

Last year, as every year, I ran through a whole series of checks while Aquilo was at home prior to towing her down to Portland Marina. When I tried to start the engine it wouldn't start. In fact it wouldn't even turn over. Although the battery seemed OK and had held its charge over the winter without requiring a top-up, it just didn't seem man enough for the job. I tried the battery out of the Land Rover and that spun it over and the engine started. I tried the boat battery, no deal, just wouldn't do it. I noticed that the CCA of that battery, 330 amps, was less than that recommended by Beta, the engine manufacturers, for a BZ482 engine. It needed a CCA of 350 to 405 amps,. I duly bought a new battery with the correct CCA and all was well.

I then performed the check correctly with water being supplied to the inlet port. It just so happens that the inlet under the hull was just the right size to allow the garden hose to fit snugly inside. I could switch the water on and adjust the flow so that it just leaked out of the top of the inlet filter after I had slackened the lid. So now when I started the engine it was being cooled correctly and I could check that water was coming out of the exhaust in the correct manner. I kept the engine running for about 15 mins, and all was well. Forward and reverse gears worked and I could rev up or let the engine tick over. It didn't miss a beat, so all would be well when I was at sea. It is worth noting that the engine always started once it was turned over and just kept going without any hesitation or misfiring, whether at sea or after a 6 month layup. You could bet your life on it.

Aquilo launched alright and I motored round to my berth in the marina. But the next day, coming in after a sail, the engine slowed down and stopped when we were just inside the marina. This was unheard of, the engine just didn't do

Manual lift pump and fuel pipes

that.

Suddenly the whole situation changed. The rocky edge of the marina was now downwind and not a place to end up. How long would I have steerage way and when would I start to drift with the wind? Quick there's a boat over there that I could reach, not ideal as it's freeboard was high, but it would do. Once there I could decide in slow time what to do.

While two members of the crew fended off I worked on the engine. There is a lift pump bolted to the starboard side of the engine which has a manual lever for priming. The photo on the last page shows the lift pump with its black outlet pipe. In this picture the inlet pipe has been removed. The two fixing bolts can be seen under the pump with the manual lever just below the left bolt sticking out of the picture. I waggled this up and down but didn't feel it was doing anything. I have two fuel filters, one bolted on the engine and an extra one that I had added just before the engine. The extra filter with its Delphi cartridge is situated on the starboard side of the engine with its manual pump with the black knob. I pushed this as well. It would hardly move even though I had pushed quite hard. I tried the engine and it fired up and we quickly motored on to our allotted berth.

Once all tied up and secure we fiddled around with the engine and, thinking that it might have been fuel starvation, undid the fuel line at various points to ensure there was fuel there. Then we noticed something strange. The diesel smelt like paint thinners.

What is going on? Diesel that smells like paint thinners?!

I'll have to check this out.

When I got home I googled it and, it was the dreaded Diesel Bug! It appears my diesel had got a bug which changed the smell to paint thinners and worse still it made some form of molecule chain that was big enough to block a fuel filter. Now, I had heard of it, but didn't know anybody who had suffered from it. There are enough diesel cars about and nobody shakes their head and says "I got the diesel bug." In fact my diesel Land Rover had been around since 1991 and wasn't having any problems.

I thought it was something that used to happen with old boats but had now been resolved.

What to do?

Aha! Block off the fuel from the tank and buy a small tank for an outboard motor and connect that in after the first of the two fuel filters. I had a spare engine fuel filter on board and I could change that, where as I didn't have a spare filter for the first. The diesel return could go back into the main tank. This would however only be a stop gap as some of the fuel wouldn't go into the engine but be returned to the old main tank. It would mean it would use a lot of fuel, but it would certainly do until I took Aquilo home after our short holiday.

So on the next day, which typically turned out to be a Sunday, we shot off to Poole and bought all the bits. On the Monday we came down to the boat armed with the spare tank, 5 litres of new fuel and some tubing, plus a small bottle of Marine 16 Diesel Bug Treatment (as used by the RNLI, it says) to kill the bug, even though it would take three days to do so. We treated the original tank with a lethal dose so that would be available in due course, and added some to the new diesel to kill any bugs in the fuel lines around the engine.

I quickly connected it all up and was ready to go. I added the new diesel to the new tank, but it didn't flow down to the lift pump. For some reason the fuel pipe came out of the top of this new tank with a tube leading down to the bottom. I tried the manual lever on the lift pump but to no avail. Of course! The new filter was empty and it would take for ever to fill it up with that small lift pump. I took it off and filled it with new diesel. But it fits on a slight angle so some of it spilt out and when fitted it was obviously not quite full. I tried pumping again and then tried the engine, hoping it would fire and pump more fuel than I could do by hand. No luck. I tried removing the pipe feeding into the lift pump, but there was no fuel there. It's that blasted fuel tank. The lift pump won't pump the fuel quickly enough to fill the pipe with fuel so that it will continue to flow. Now how am I going to get the fuel out of the tank? Only one thing for it, I

would have to suck it and then before it arrived at my end of the pipe, hold it over a jar to check fuel is flowing.

Yes, you've guessed it! I got a mouthful of diesel! YUK!!! but at least we had fuel at the bottom end of the pipe. Right reconnect up, give a few pumps on the lift pump and start her up. And she did, a bit hesitantly at first, but then she slowly settled into her normal tick over. Phew! It's too late now but tomorrow we will be able to go out sailing again. And I must get rid of that diesel taste in my mouth!

The next day, Monday, we motored out and had a lovely sail in light winds. Very relaxing after the previous days worry. But on our return as we were approaching the marina the engine died. As the wind was light and in the right direction, down wind all the way, I reckoned we could sail in under jib. So I hoisted the jib and we gently sailed into the marina right up to the berth. We managed it, without any mishaps, but the berthing was not my best as there was no easy way of stopping with a following wind. Dan just jumped onto the pontoon at the first available opportunity and man handled her to a stop. We packed everything away and went home. I have to admit I was pretty despondent. It still wasn't working properly. But what could I do to put it right?

On Tuesday, in the afternoon we went down to the boat and worked on the engine. We tried adding more diesel to the tank so that it wouldn't have so far to climb before the pipe started going down to the engine. We put the tank on the side seat so that gravity would help, but all to no avail she just wouldn't start. There was fuel at the lift pump inlet but obviously not at the injectors. We gave up after three hours and went home.

The next day was a bit wet and, as I didn't have any ideas for sorting it out, we stayed at home.

Thursday, and my son and his family had come down from Newbury to have a couple of days

New fuel filter with lift pump attached

Much advice!

sailing with us. We went down and tried some more fiddling. It did fire and ran for a short time and then gently died. I couldn't get her going again. I tried a lot more pumping but to no avail.

Right time to call in the cavalry, the local marine engineers, who happened to be working on a neighbouring boat. He suggested I should walk round and have a word with his boss. An hour later his boss came over and confidently assured us he would have it going before too long. So now there are four of us peering at the engine, the engineer in the cabin and me to the rear of the engine and our two lads at the side.

As three days had elapsed from adding the diesel bug killer into the main tank the engineer felt it would be better to go back to using that. He also had a spare element for the first fuel filter, so he changed that and basically had the system back as it was originally. He did warn me that I should change the filters on a regular basis until all the fuel in the main tank was clean. He then slackened off the nuts leading to the injectors so that he could bleed the rest of the air out of the system. But the manual pump on the lift pump didn't seem to do anything and the one on the first filter was very hard. However he did get air out of the bleed screw and then out of the injectors. A turn of the starter and away she went. And then she stopped. After a lot of tries with the starter motor when she fired but wouldn't run for long, she eventually did, and then seemed fine. So we were back in business. It was only five o'clock so we would have time for a short sail.

It would be great to see if our grandson, aged three and a half, was happy with sailing. Well he loved it and we had a very enjoyable sail in light winds. Back at the berth by 18:40, no problems with the engine.

The next day, Friday.

On the way back across Portland harbour heading

for the marina the wind died away and we motored in. 200 yd short of the marina entrance the engine died. Oh no not again! No amount of pumping achieved a working engine, so we just sat there. There's virtually no current and with no wind we just sat there. 200 yd from the entrance. So near and yet so far. You're so far above the water in an Atalanta, there's no easy way of paddling her. If I had had some oars or even one I could have sculled her over the stern, but it would have to have been pretty long and that would have been a pain when it was not being used, trying to find somewhere to stow it. Turning the rudder back and forth didn't do much, but then it's a balanced rudder so there's almost as much pushing you back as there is pushing you forward.

Anyway after about a quarter of an hour the wind started to blow but from the south, totally opposite to what it had been. Did I say blow, it was more of a fitful puff. Right this means the approach to the berth is head to wind. I thought I could do that with just the mainsail. Also I would be able to regulate the speed of my approach easily by tweaking the mainsail without having to worry what the jib was doing. Sure enough we made it including having to lay a tack in the marina to set us up for the final approach. A better job than the first sailing approach. The Atalanta is amazing, so easily handled with a variety of sails and with virtually no wind.

When I got home I thought about the problem and it all seems to centre about the lift pump. The rubber pipe between the lift pump and the engine fuel filter, and indeed from there to the injectors, is held in place by crimped universal clamps fitted by Beta. I had not touched these as I was not certain how to remove the clamps without damaging the pipework. I could not, of course, refit the clamps. But they had to come off as I needed to see whether the problem was in the pump, or the fuel filter or indeed in the injectors. My thought was that if the problem was now a blockage in the lift pump I could connect the hose from the first filter directly to the second filter leaving the blocked pump completely isolated. As the main fuel tank is under the side-deck gravity should be more than enough to ensure the fuel reaches the injector's high pressure pump situated just before the injectors.

So on the next day, Saturday, I set to and removed the clamp. It wasn't that difficult to get off. I reconnected the hose from the first filter directly into the engine filter. I then went through the standard setting up procedure and bled the system first with the breather screw open and then by slackening the nuts to each injector. The feel of the manual push pump was now just what I expected. I could feel the fuel moving through the pipes and air bubbled out the breather, and then out the sides of the nuts by the injectors. Right tighten everything up and lets give it a try. She fired straight up, ran fast or slow and generally felt more like the solid engine she really is.

OK now for the acid test. Lets go out for a sail and see if she behaves herself. We had a nice sail down the coast to Lulworth Cove and back. No problems with the engine either outward or on the return. This is more like it!

Sunday we were busy and couldn't go down to the boat. Also the weather was going to turn on Monday to a spell of variable and windy weather. I made the decision to go for our last sail on Monday and then retrieve her onto the trailer and bring her home.

So on Monday after a nice but increasingly windy sail I attempted to motor Aquilo back onto her trailer. This involved backing the trailer with its five foot extension tow bar completely into the water until only the forward tower with its winch was visible above the water. I had fitted a set of lead markers onto the tower so that they would lead me straight and centred onto the trailer. In the mean time Aquilo was prepared by winding up the keels till they were at about 30^0 from the horizontal. This was for two reasons, the first to stop them hitting the ground but more importantly so that they would slot into a pair of 12 ins "V"s cut into the aft boat support of the trailer. This would then allow Aquilo to be winched the rest of the way onto the trailer whilst maintaining the correct alignment on the trailer. The rudder blade was also raised to stop that hitting the ground. The end result of these changes is that Aquilo was more difficult to steer and control. In light winds this is not too much of a problem, but today was a different kettle of fish. It was blowing hard, possibly gusting force

6, virtually straight down the slip. Also the tide was at high water springs. This meant Aquilo was subject to the full force of the wind. Before it had always been at fairly low tide and the land blanketed the wind from hitting Aquilo's hull.

Coming slowly along the course of the markers I kept being blown off to one side or the other. The problem was that the centre of effort of the keels was now a lot further aft so that all Aquilo wanted to do was spin round until the stern was facing the wind. Also the rudder was not so effective and she also slipped sideways because of the reduced area of the keels. The point is, I had to use the engine a lot to regain control after she veered off, first to get her under control and then to retreat to have another go. The engine responded perfectly whatever I asked of it. On one occasion when she was drifting backwards at a rate of knots I had to use full throttle ahead to avoid running down onto a jetty.

I never heard the engine growl like she did. There was a beast in there! Did she mean business? This was no idle increase in speed this was brute force! I asked for power and she gave it in spades. Wind, what wind! You're not going to beat this engine!

Back in control again I could ease the power. I think I can say that this gave a very good test for the engine and she passed with flying colours.

On something like the fourth attempt I managed to locate the keels in the "V"s before the bows veered off. Friend Andy, who had the unenviable job of manning the winch, was standing precariously on the front of the trailer which was completely under water. Once the winch was connected he first winched the bows into the wind and the centre line of the trailer and then when both keels were firmly slotted into the "V"s he winched her further on the trailer until she was correctly placed. Switching off the engine and then towing her up the slip confirmed that all was well and she was perfectly placed on the trailer ready for the trip home.

I'm picking up this story as I start preparing Aquilo for another summer. This year, for the first time we went to the AGM because it was being held on our side of London. I talked over the problem with Dominique who suggested that the fuel in the tank would still contain enough molecule chains to bung up the filters again, so it would be better to get rid of it. The difficulty and cost of trying to clean the fuel would be more than the cost of replacing the fuel.

OK but how am I going to get the tank and fuel out of Aquilo. The tank is situated under the port gunwale behind the backrest for the cockpit seat. The backrest came off pretty easily as I normally leave the screw heads unpainted as I think they look nice (and, of course, handy for a problem like this). This revealed the tank which was some 52 inches long with a diameter of 10 inches, albeit somewhat flatten at the rear end so it would fit under the backrest. I estimated I had something like 4 to 5 gallons of fuel, so the tank plus fuel was fairly heavy and very awkward. With levers and brute strength I managed to get it out until it was sitting across the cockpit and resting at the forward end of both cockpit seats. I now had the awkward task of getting it up over the side and down to the ground. I didn't fancy balancing it on my shoulder while I clambered over the gunwale and down the step ladder. It wasn't going to be much easier with more people and very prone to doing some damage if it knocked into something on the way.

Hey! What am I thinking! This is Aquilo. She's used to things being winched and hauled. Easy. Make loops round each end of the tank and join it to an extended main halyard (to allow it to reach the ground). Now I could winch it up. A rope attached to the lifting point and then to the aft starboard mooring cleat would stop it swinging into the back of the main cabin. A further warp was tied to a strong point well away to the starboard of Aquilo and joined to the lifting point using the main sheet. So once the tank was high enough to clear the gunwale heaving on the main sheet moved it over the starboard gunwale where it was gently lowered to the ground by slowly releasing the main halyard. All the time Carol was gently guiding it so that it hit nothing on the way. All nice and controlled, no great effort and we could stop anytime and adjust as required. Piece of cake, it took more time to connect all the ropes than it did to get it onto the ground!

Once the fuel had been run out into five old oil cans, the last one being out of the upturned tank via the filler, allowing any sludge to be got out

with the dregs of the diesel, the tank was considerably lighter. It was lifted back onboard over the side-deck without any problem and fitted back into its allotted space. Before refilling with diesel the first fuel filter was replaced. What a mucky job. Undoing the top bolt allows the bottom to come off spilling all the fuel into the bilge. However it was easily replaced and we were ready to go.

I put two gallons of diesel into the tank and set about getting rid of the trapped air in the lines. Using the manual pump on this filter I attempted to pump fuel round the system with the bleed screw open to allow the air out. Nothing happened, and the pump didn't feel it was doing anything. I checked everything and discovered that due to the bows down slope there wasn't enough fuel in the tank to reach the outlet. I added another gallon. Ah. That's better, now the fuel is reaching the filter and the pump is working correctly. I worked my way along the line first bleeding the air out of the filter, then out of the main engine bleed screw. But I couldn't get it to come out past the loosened injector feed nut. I tried to start the engine but it would only run erratically. Obviously air was still in the system. I needed to resolve the problem of the blocked fuel pump so that it could pump fuel while the engine was running, hopefully clearing the air. The pump is situated on the starboard side of the engine fairly low down, so that a mirror was required to see how the pump was attached. There were two bolts, which once seen were easy to reach and undo. The pump came off leaving the gasket on the side of the engine. Back on the bench the pump was dismantled and cleaned. It was not obvious why it was blocked although there was some dirt in the valves. Once clean it was reassembled and checked to ensure it was working. Replacing the pump was a little fiddly as it had to be rotated as it was offered up to its seating position. The bolts went in easily and the hoses reconnected. Again I pumped through to remove the air but still did not get any fuel out of the injector feed nut. So I tried the engine again with a similar outcome with it only firing intermittently. So I stopped it so I could think what else I could do. I then noticed that the feed nut was still completely undone AND there was fuel around it! I quickly tightened up the nut and tried the engine again. She stuttered, but kept going, speeded up, coughed a couple of times and then ran correctly. Phew! Time to get some cooling water to the engine. As I have mentioned earlier my garden hose fits snugly into the seawater inlet. Once in the tap could be switched on and water would pass into the boat via the onboard water-filter. OK lets start the engine again.

Away she went first time. I adjusted the water flow so that it just stopped flowing into the bilge and sat back to see how well the engine was running. Sweet as a nut. Water was being blown out of the exhaust and all was working well. Given full throttle she didn't miss a beat and sped up, then back to tickover which is just what she did. After a quarter of an hour running perfectly I switched off. Job done!

Lets get the rest of the jobs done and get her into the water.

Well she's now been in the water for two weeks and the engine has worked faultlessly, so I really think this time that the problem has been resolved.

The point of all this ramble is. It needn't have happened!

I could have avoided all these problems with the engine if I had forked out £11.85 for a bottle of Diesel Bug Treatment and added it to the fuel from day one at a regular preventative use of, and I'm reading from the bottle, 100 ml per 2,000 litres of fuel. This is 1 ml per 20 litres of fuel. This 100 ml bottle would last me for ever.

Well I'm using it from now on!

AOA 60 – the 60th anniversary of the Association

by Mike Dixon, Commodore

AOA 60 was a good event – if you were there, I think you would agree with that sentiment; if you didn't manage to get there, perhaps at some time in the future?

Planning for the event went back months and many thanks to those who contributed so much time and effort to make the event such a success – not just in the planning stages, but also in the various activities during the event itself.

So what happened? It was seen as too good an opportunity to let pass without marking the event. After all, it's not too many clubs and associations which can boast of having their 60th birthday celebrations. The choice of location was not easy because it doesn't matter where you choose as, with a membership like ours spread all over the world, there will be those who will inevitably miss out. Ever mindful of this inescapable fact, it was quickly established that the chosen venue had to be in with a very real chance of attracting the most people and, more importantly in many respects, having the maximum number of boats on the water. So the Suffolk Yacht Harbour at Levington, on England's east coast was chosen.

Levington turned out to be an ideal venue, launching facilities, pontoon moorings and a local sailing charity that were willing to have their premises as our temporary 'clubhouse'. In the end, largely due to the number of people who confirmed they would be there, we managed by adopting our motorhome (and awning) as the shore-based focal point.

Friday was largely spent in boats and people arriving. Two boats, "Atalanta Mary" and "Colchide" are resident at Levington, and they were joined earlier in the week by "Helene" and by "Dervorguilla" on the Friday. Regrettably, we didn't manage to have our boat ready, so we ended up coming by road and 'mooring' "Atalanta" as a shore based exhibit. Seventeen people came and went over the weekend, though given the constraints of our 'clubhouse', thankfully not all at the same time! Lots more came and asked us what the occasion was all about. Friday evening saw a fluid supper at the 'clubhouse'.

Saturday was fair – forecast favourable – and the sail in company was on. Nothing too ambitious was planned (the theme of the entire weekend really) and the four boats with various crew

members set off for a sail down the Orwell and a little way up the Stour, before returning in fine style to Levington. Conditions had been ideal. That evening there was a repeat of the fluid supper at the 'clubhouse', this time fish and chips.

Sunday's forecast was pretty dire and sailing was postponed until later in the afternoon when a couple of reefed down boats went out for a somewhat bracing sail, though one of the boats did manage to reach Pin Mill for lunch at the Butt and Oyster. There was a lot of rain, but we managed to secure a table for supper at the Ship Inn at Levington village, just a short distance from the marina.

Monday was a repeat of Sunday but with much better weather. We spent the time preparing "Atalanta" for the road and there was a certain end-of-term feeling. Still a good turn-out though and some twelve people sat down to supper on the converted lightship.

Over the course of the weekend, the boats and crews were -

A16 "Dervorguilla" - Martin & Janet Bennett, Alistair Rodgers and Bernard Marshall
A89 "Colchide" – Richard James & Joe Lloyd
A102 "Atalanta Mary" – Alistair Rodgers and Bernard Marshall
A124 "Helene" – Nick Phillips & Carol Moss

It was great to be able to contrast and compare the differences and similarities between the prototype A1 "Atalanta", the Mk 1 A16 "Dervorguilla", both of which were enjoying their first 'public' appearance following lengthy hibernations, and the three Mk.2 Atalantas.

The furthest travelled to the AOA 60 rally was Jon Stearn, who had driven down from Aberdeenshire to accompany his mum Jane to the Rally. Michelle Lloyd also attended with Joe, and we were visited on the first day by Ewan & Tracey from the East Anglian Sailing Trust.

But that wasn't all of the events planned by way of celebrating sixty years of the Association. Two initiatives, the AOA 60 quiz and the 'Round the World mileage accumulator, can both be found on our website. As well, we asked for anecdotes about all aspects of the Association, be it about boats, people, events – whatever. All three initiatives are still available – please do contribute – there are still prizes to be won! Also, I understand that it's still not too late to order your AOA60 regalia.

Reflections

As the 60th anniversary celebrations come to an end, it is worthwhile remembering the selfless contributions of the many individuals who were instrument in getting the Atalanta (and derivatives) off the drawing board and onto the water. That they did so means that we can enjoy the fruits of their labours to this day. For those of you who wish to refresh your memories, or those of you who want to find out more of the Association's history, you need go no further than the website where there is a wealth of information available – much of it for the first time. But I would like to take this opportunity to reflect on what lies ahead.

To begin with, it's perhaps worthwhile considering the huge changes that have taken place since our boats first met salt water all those 60 plus years ago. My list is not inclusive, but perhaps captures the major changes.

- Leisure boat design has changed almost beyond recognition. No-one now builds 'Spartan' boats – they have to be state-of-the-art with every modern convenience available. Long gone are the days when 'electronics' consisted (if you were lucky) of a whirling depth finder. And an electronic flushing heads? I would hazard a modest wager that nowadays the most important person in a production yard is not the foreman shipwright but the interior designer.

- Next on my list is the (almost) disappearance of the Corinthian spirit. Our boats were conceived during the aftermath of the Second World War. A scant ten years had elapsed since the cessation of hostilities; materials were incredibly hard to come by; rationing was still in force in the UK. I can scarcely comprehend how Captain Bill Urry, his wife and their four young children went across to France in the 24 foot long "Atalanta". Never mind the adventure – just storing the boat for that trip, with rationing widespread, must have been a feat in itself. Extraordinary!

- Lest we forget, Robin Knox-Johnson had yet to embark on the first solo circumnavigation.

- The slow introduction and then the explosion of the use of modern materials, composites and equipment. Nothing wrong with that, but modern boats and equipment have more and more to go wrong, which leads me on to my final point –

- Expense. When they were built, Atalantas were expensive (I've just looked - £61,083.89 in today's money). 10% of that would buy you a half decent Atalanta today. But it's not just the initial outlay but the overall cost of berthing fees, insurance, repairs, etc, etc for which the modern 'luxury' sailor has to (and seems willing to) shell out.

So why do we keep looking after and sailing these somewhat anachronistic boats? We'll all have our reasons I'm sure, but rather than put words into your mouths, here are my 'reasons'.

- I have been fortunate over many years to sail on board many different types of boats. And to my mind, the ones you return to (or want to return to – not always the same thing) are the ones with soul – not just Atalantas of course, but other boats as well – mostly older boats, but modern ones as well. The sort of boat that as you walk, or row away from, you pause and take a look back over your shoulder to admire the look, the shape, the lines. If you have such

a boat, she's got soul. With some truly brilliant exceptions, few modern boats have that effect. Just about anyone can identify or hazard a guess about an Atalanta, but I would doubt they'd be quite so confident about recognising a modern production boat.

- Which of course leads me on to my second reason in admiring the Atalanta so much. The design principles and build qualities are unique. Some would say quirky but all would have to agree their superiority. You just have to read the sales brochures (on the website!) that introduced the Atalanta family to realise how practical and well designed the boats were. I'm not so sure that the brochures were needed, after all, the boats sold themselves.

- The third reason is one of pride – a vaguely old-fashioned word that means many different things to many different people. I for one, am immensely proud to have had the opportunity of temporarily owning three of the designs though not an actual Atalanta – shame I hear you say! I would like to think that I will have passed on all three in a better state than when I acquired them.

Which leads me onto my last reflection – an optimistic view of the future.

The Atalanta and its siblings have been around now for over sixty years. Of all the boats completed, a significant number are still with us and are being sailed or actively restored. In other words, the Association is still, after all these years, a viable proposition and will continue to provide inspiration and encouragement to those who want to keep the Association and the boats alive.

But, and inevitably, time marches on and there is a slow trickle of boats which, for one reason or another, are no longer with us. Can this decline be halted? - probably not. Can this this decline be slowed? – yes. Is there a future for the Association? – most certainly yes. Will the boats and the Association be around in another sixty year's time? – I'd like to hope yes.

In using the often mis-quoted saying – "It only takes a few good people to do nothing in order for evil to triumph" sorts of sums up where we are now. Doing nothing is, in my mind, not an option. We – all of us – must continue to promote the Association and our love for the boats and people it represents. Only in doing so will we secure a future for both the boats and the Association. We owe it to all those members - past, present and future – to do all we can to see the Association continue.

A9 Ereina
by Pete Crane

I have owned Ereina A9 for nearly thirty years however this time is coming to an end.

When I was very young my mother read "Swallows and Amazons" to me and from that moment onwards when asked what I wanted for Christmas or Birthday it was always a boat (optimism of youth) or at least money towards it. I finally bought a small dingy at the beginning of my teens and the nearest place I could keep her was eighteen miles away: therefore cycling became my second sport. In the summer months on Wednesdays after school I would often cycle to the boat, spend an hour on the water before retuning home. At sixteen I went to nautical college with a view to going into the Merchant Navy, on a number of occasions sailing faster than the instructors (they were a bit on the heavy side). However, the reality of life on merchant ships was nothing like my dreams so I left college after one term to follow another hobby (archaeology a career in ruins). I did not sail again until I acquired an old Fairey Firefly in my early twenties and while messing about on an estuary noticed an interestingly different looking yacht which I found out from the owner was a Fairey Atalanta. Doing a bit of research and asking around showed that these were very capable boats, but at that time well out of my budget. The Firefly was sold in my late twenties having finally been accepted for university and it was not until a few years later, married and living on the coast in Wales, that consideration was given again to sailing in a boat that I could race with the local mixed group of yachts, go off cruising, and in the fullness of time, take to classic boat gatherings.

Contacting the Atalanta Owners Association provided a list of boats for sale and an abundance of enthusiastic advice and later support. Ereina was the fourth boat that we looked at. She had been sitting in a garden with a view to being restored for about ten years, she was under a tarpaulin which was one foot shorter than the

A peaceful overnight anchorage in the haven

boat and other than this last stern section did not look too bad and came with a trailer, lots of gear and a spare but different engine from another Atalanta as the one in the boat turned over, but was a non runner. Arrangements were made to have the boat towed to West Wales, put in a farm shed adjacent to where a boat builder worked who would assist with the repairs.

Ereina sailing in Milford Haven

As far as I know Ereina was sold by Fairey as a shell to a boat builder in Amsterdam, therefore some of the fitting out is non-standard and all of the floorboard locations were written in Dutch. She was registered as being back in Britain in the 1960's.

Work in the first season entailed removing the old Ford side valve engine and PNP lever operated feathering propeller and stern gear. Repair was possible but I did not want a revolving prop in neutral in our packed harbour with all the trailing lines: anyway I had a spare engine and gearbox to fit later. The interior of the boat was stripped. The keel bolts were freed, one of which had to be heated to cherry red before it could be pushed sideways (a bit worrying all that heat in a wooden boat). The hull was sound, the stern deck was made good, but below some fibreglass bodge around the coach roof there was more rot than I realised. This was made good including steaming laminates to go round the edge of the roof.

In October of the first year of ownership, and on recommendations of the boat repairer we put her in the water for a test sail. This did not go quite as intended. The idea was to float her off the trailer before pushing her out of the harbour with a borrowed Seagull outboard. When afloat we headed down off but after fifty or so yards realised that the trailer was stuck beneath the boat, prodding with boat hooks proved ineffective so I jumped on one of the mudguards: this worked very well, it sunk the trailer but left me somewhat wet. My memories of the first sail were somewhat wet, but we did go out and sailed back into the harbour entrance to await the tide so we could get back onto the mooring (trailer

had been rescued by then). However, when trying to start the outboard the nut on top of the starting pulley came off and we had to be towed back by the women's rowing team

Over the first winter the hull was taken back to bare wood, not an easy task, especially as she had been covered in trowelling plaster to fair the hull. This work took many evenings leaving me looking as if a large amount of flour had been upended over my head. In the spring the spare engine, a petrol Coventry Victor, was coached back into life. When trying to fit and align the engine it was discovered that the propshaft in Ereina was too low and an angled drive would be necessary and expensive. Therefore it was a second hand outboard which was fitted for our second season on the water. This arrangement gave some interesting times: to start you needed to be at the back of the boat but the controls were in the cockpit, once running we could go straight ahead or to starboard, going hard to port just didn't work. If put into astern we just slewed sideways until some speed was achieved. Our moorings are tightly packed, with two forward and two aft lines leaving little room for error: we made lots of them. Racing did not go well, I just couldn't seem to get her to go and we were normally last. However finally the wind did blow and we did go, resulting in a second place, then the outboard wouldn't start, the crew (wife Louise) revolted and stated she would not go in the boat again until there was a decent engine, which she would contribute towards.

The second winter a new Yanmar 1GM10 was fitted, which has proved to be brilliant, starts on the button, manoeuverswell and the boat goes astern like a dream. Our boat repairer liked our Atalanta so much he bought one of his own (Piers Beckett see earlier articles on Echo). Sailing with Echo, full rig, did demonstrate the difference of our ¾ rig: in light winds Ereina would be dropping back, but force 4 or above to windward, or if Echo had to reduce sail we would normally go a bit better.

After another year or so our son arrived, and other than a couple of short voyages, Louise retired from sailing. She never liked the boat leaning over, the claustrophobic interior especially the back cabin, and in particular stepping over the diagonal bulkhead, but at least she could stand in the main cabin without bending. We moved to a bigger house in the village that had a conservatory long enough to put the mast in for re-varnishing and a garden where I could keep the boat and do a bit of work on her of an evening. However, house repairs, a new job and family left less time and money for boating

A few years were then spent mostly just day sailing by myself or racing with other crew, before my son was old enough to press gang. We had some great father son time and attended the first three of the biannual Seafare traditional boat meetings on Milford Haven. Unfortunately during this time racing at the local sailing club ground to a halt.

The last and best voyage that we undertook was as part of the Atalanta round Britain relay in tandem with Trevor Thompson in Calista on the leg from Milford Haven to Falmouth, and retune. While on the way round Lands End, in not the best of conditions, we finally discovered where the rough weather leak, that had always plagued the boat, was coming in (bodged repair on the top of a keel box/bulkhead from before we took ownership). Subsequently I decided that until this was fixed and a number of upgrades were completed she would not go back in.

Circumstances changed when I was made redundant and although I now had the time to work on the boat it was not what I wanted to do: I wanted to go sailing, so a small plastic cruiser racer was bought so that my son and I could go sailing before he left home. We now have a small cruising catamaran, partly because Louise is more likely to sail on a boat that doesn't heel much and is light and airy inside. I am however really going to miss the Atalanta which has been a large and enjoyable part of both my and my son's life.

In Touch with Brittany
by John Searle A 171 Touch

At last the yearning for the sound of waves slapping on hull, the thrill of entering an unknown port and the general desire to be back on water finally prompted us to action and in late 2016 we made our move.

Our Atalanta 'Touch' had lain shamefully neglected amongst the brambles and stinging nettles of an East Anglian boatyard for many years, but now we had the opportunity to move her into a friend's barn in central Brittany where she could be restored to something like her former glory. However we had not reckoned that within this pastoral landscape lived The Montagnes.

In due course 171 Touch was trailed over and found a space in the barn alongside Robbie's numerous car restoration projects (a Triumph Roadster, a Citroen Lamborghini) , camper vans, several old Renaults, two tractors, agricultural machinery and a commando speedboat capable of hitting a beach at 40 knots.

Robbie - an organic farmer and skilled engineer - had owned many boats himself over the years including a World War 2 air sea rescue craft and at one time ran a supply trawler which he used to service the North Sea rigs. He was old school and a man of many talents.

When she arrived the poor old girl looked a sad mess with rotting wood on the stern quarter and flaking paint and alarming topside cracks. It was obvious that one more year in the open might have been the end of her. However little by little the work progressed well enough over the following year - and with it life found new purpose and meaning. Can there be anything more satisfying than trying to restore an old classic when one has the time (even if one is fairly inept) , but dark clouds were gathering on the Bretagne horizon.

The little commune of Collorec in central Finistere is typical of the region - set among rolling farmland growing mostly beans, corn and fodder for the herds of cows, and pigs with pockets of untamed woods and numerous streams and rivers. The young Bretons had generally left for the cities and since the advent of tractors and other machinery following the First World War, the population was a quarter of what it had been. It is not uncommon to drive through village after village and never see a soul emerge from the neat well-ordered homes. Fewer farmers worked larger farms with the latest machinery, and owed their lives to the banks.

Little did we know that lurking within this sleepy rural backwater lived a notorious criminal family who had moved into the area and terrorised their neighbours for years with their

Touch in the barn

Back in the water

increasingly bizarre behaviour, - but had been quiet of late. The father and his two sons (all highly educated) would sneak into people's barns and houses at night and steal what they could. On the rare occasions when they were caught, they would plead mental illness and kleptomania and generally got away with it. The sleepy local gendarmes were no match for their cunning. One of the son's even set up a badger watching website to explain his nocturnal wanderings should he be accosted.

The items they stole defied belief - they were once seen dragging someone's piano over a field (it was never found) When they were finally raided, police discovered over 40 chainsaws, piles of brush cutters and so much other material that two trucks were needed to take it away. However much was never recovered as they would bury the loot well away from their property in nearby woods, wrapped in tarps (and sails) no doubt. The recovered items were exhibited in a warehouse and the police invited people to identify what was theirs. Needless to say it wasn't just locals who claimed things and the warehouse soon emptied !

The farm they lived in boasted a watch tower of military proportions and the house and barns themselves were draped in great sheets of black plastic, obscuring many of the windows, such was their paranoid nature. The locals held meetings and demanded action but the police wanted 'absolute proof', and they rarely bothered to take fingerprints or investigate after a break in. It was generally acknowledged they didn't want the hassle and that roadblocks at roundabouts on a Saturday night was more their thing.

Against this background, of which we knew nothing, work on Touch progressed well enough and by the summer of 2017 she was almost ready to hit the water - hopefully without too much of it coming in. Though I'm still a bit worried about the keel plates, they seem to clamp ok, but a lot of rust is dropping off them! I've had the keels out once in my life and hoped the bolts were still sound.

I had been away for a week and when I returned to the barn I knew something was wrong. The tarp was pulled back, washboards removed and all was gone. All the sails - sheets and blocks - fenders - nav instruments life jackets and many small odds and ends like head torches, flares and spare shackles - those little valuable things one accumulates over the years. Robbie was also in shock. They had broken into his workshop and made off with his welding gear and many of his tools. Neither of us were covered by insurance. The police showed little interest.

We groaned and raged and searched the woods for stashes and demanded action - but it was futile and resignation set in. Splash day was put off and the months went by and little by little we started to replace the essentials - hoping that one day the local police might have the courage to mount another raid, and some of the missing gear might turn up.

Meanwhile in the following months the Montagnes renewed rampage continued in the district with consequences for another Brit boat owner in the area. The man named 'M' lived a

A calm evening in Touch

couple of miles from the thieves' den and was restoring a blue water craft when they struck again. They took his life raft, nav instruments and other gear just when he was also close to completion. He was understandably apoplectic.

M who had a somewhat direct approach to solving problems (he once super glued a tooth back in !) - went round to the thieves den with a friend to search the barns for his missing items but was unfortunately discovered and attacked by the pugnacious Frenchman.

Though a retiree some10 years older, M gave a good account of himself and in the ensuing battle the warrior Brit came close to drowning Montagne in a duck pond, but for the intervention of his two burly sons armed with staves. This resulted in both M and his friend being hospitalised, and themselves facing charges of assault and trespass. However to many locals he was regarded as a hero and might inspire more direct action in the future. To others who understood French law better he was a fool.

An old Breton commented soon after " I have bought a gun - I am 84 years old my life does not matter, I will shoot the bastard Montagne" (we await the event which has not so far happened).

We are still hopeful that Touch will float again and have a few nautical adventures in the near future. As for the Montagnes, a few months ago the man himself was caught by a French couple in their barn at night and detained with the help of a portly English neighbour who answered the cries for help and sat on him until the law arrived. He spent a night in the cells and will face charges, though few expect him to be put out of circulation.

To be continued ……..

Bolt Holes A142 Sugar Plum
by Greg Manning

Despite the title this article is not about anchorages that A142 has run to for refuge from bad weather.

When Roy and I bought A142 in 2000 amongst the documentation was an original service schedule for the boat including the keels which is shown at the bottom of the page:

As can be seen from it the keels should be removed every season and Roy and I have always done this not only to anti-foul the keel boxes but also to clean and grease the mechanisms. I am surprised if any owner expects this mechanism to survive more than one season without being serviced.

Removing the keel bolts entails removing the outboard keel bolt covers and on A142 the wood under these covers had become so perforated with the repeated use of screws that action was needed. This despite the areas being strengthened with applications of SP106. The bolt holes through the wood sides of the keel boxes were worn around their circumference which reduced the area that the covers landed and sealed onto. In order to rectify this problem this is what we did.

The holes were cleaned back to the bare wood using a flapper wheel on a flexible drive and all the paint removed from the outboard area around the cover plate's area.

The diameter of the hole was measured and this multiplied by π to get the circumference. A piece of dense plastic sheet was cut to this length plus a

(t) Ballast Keels and Keel Boxes

The keel boxes should be painted internally each season, this is carried out as follows:

Raise the boat approximately 2 ft and support the boat by blocking up under the keel. One set of blocks to be positioned at the rear bulkhead and a second set just forward the front ends of the keel box capping. Fit wedges between blocks and hull at rear position to prevent the boat rolling. Remove the metal fairing plates on the bottom of the hull and the forward ends of the keel slots. Lower the keels in the normal manner, until the keels make contact with the ground. Remove the six sealing plates on the outboard sides of the keel boxes forward of the diagonal bulkhead which give access to the six keel mounting bolts. Remove the six circular keel mounting nuts and rubber sealing washers.

Remove the bolts on which the keels pivot. These are the lower of the three bolts each side. The four clamping bolts to remain temporarily in position. The pins securing the lower ends of the keel hoist gear stirrups also remain in position as do the sealing boards. Lower away on the hoist gear to drop the forward ends of the keels from their boxes while at the same time moving the lower ends of the keel aft along the ground. Continue this operation until the screw jacks are fully extended. The load can then be taken off the jacks by blocking up under the forward ends of the keels. The remaining four keel clamping bolts can then be removed together with the clamping plates.

Access is now obtainable to the inside of the keel boxes, which should be painted with antifoul paint. Clean ballast keels, and if not previously painted, give 2 coats of primer and two coats of anti-foul, otherwise repaint with anti-foul. The sealing boards can becleaned and painted at the same time. To re-assemble the keels, the reverse procedure is adopted, assembling the clamping plates and the four clamping bolts first. Ensure the forward ends of the keels are entered correctly between the clamping plates and that the plates are in their correct positions. Grease the screw jacks, mounting bolts and bores of the pivot holes in the keels before re-assembly. New rubber sealing washers should be fitted to the bolts if they show any signs of hardening or deterioration.

little (a metric or imperial “little” will do!) and then adjusted to fit inside the holes. It was only possible to get it exactly round once in the hole.

The face of the plastic tube was then levelled with the box side using a straight edge and the void between the worn woodwork and the plastic tube filled with marine filler. The outer surface of the tube had been lightly smeared with Vaseline to ensure the filler did not adhere to it.

Once the filler had hardened the tube

Tube levelled and partly filled

Flapper wheel and flexible drive

wood. This allows deterioration of the ply once the outer hardwood layer is breached, a major source of keel box failure. This is exacerbated by the screws penetrating multiple laminates.

A picture speaks a thousand words and the picture alongside shows the new system in detail. All parts were made of A4 stainless steel by a local precision engineer.

was removed and the surface cleaned level with a small electric sander with a pointed nose that would fit into the confined space between the box sides and the bilge and the inside of the holes “tidied up” using the flapper wheel. Job done, the only note of caution is that not all the holes were the same size so it is worth measuring them all and start with the biggest and cut the pipe down to fit the smaller ones.

Having made good the holes the next step was to make a replacement system for the bolt hole covers that would not entail repeatedly screwing into the wood. I note that the ¾ inch ply used by Fairey is not the best quality with some of the inner laminates being of soft

Tidying up the filled hole

Repaired hole

The new assembly consists of a base plate with countersunk set screws welded from the rear and machined flush. This is bedded with Sikaflex and screwed to the box. The rubber seal is glued to the base plate with impact adhesive and the cover plate is given a light covering of Vaseline and secured with wing nuts and spring washers. Each plate has two nylock nuts to guarantee security.

This system has been in place for two seasons and has been found to be very satisfactory and makes the task of removing the keels for their annual service very much easier as well as being more structurally sound and ensuring no further damage to the plywood box sides.

Oh I forgot to mention the cost…..It was more than I expected but then Hey Ho that is life!

Components of one of the new assemblies

The completed installation. Slight misalignment of the welded set screws makes the covers individually paired to thier bases. Hence the alignment marks.

How scary? by Mike Dixon

"Have the ropes and fenders rigged on the port side", the skipper requested.

The crew, John and David, exchanged glances; clearly the skipper had finally flipped. The boat was motoring up the west coast of the rock bound coast of Auskerry in the Orkneys and the nearest harbour was at least a couple of hours away. Nevertheless, good crew as they were, they prepared the ropes and fenders as required.

No sooner had the tasks been completed, the skipper throttled back and turned in towards the island. The crew, to their credit, remained stoic.

Just as they thought that the boat was about to be dashed onto the rocks, a narrow artificial cleft in the rocks appeared and the skipper neatly brought the boat alongside. He smiled.

"Can't stay long – ten minutes or so – time for a photo – tide's falling and I don't want to go aground. Thought you might like to have a look at the only harbour on the island. Did you spot the leading markers?"

Quarter of an hour later, they were on their way again. And to this day, the island of Auskerry is known as "How scary".

The anchorage at Auskerry

Winter Deck Cover for A169 by Chris Green

Overview

I removed the canvas cockpit tent for valeting over the winter. It has been in situ for over a year. and it will benefit from a clean and general check over for chafe etc. To protect A169 for future winter lay-ups I have made a three-part Cordura fabric deck cover. This comprises a centre (stand-alone) cockpit cover and separate fore and aft deck cover sections. These all extend to the toe rail along the length of the decks -as you can see in the photos. The aft cover section has a two-way centre zip (with Velcro cover tab) for boat access; when working aboard during colder weather this can be zipped shut. Clear panels over the saloon and forehatch portlights allow daylight inside i.e. if working below with the cover in place. As the cover is in three parts it is easily dismantled and stowed on board - with the option of using the middle (over the boom) section as a quick deployment cover for general use.

The Jones Sewing Machine

The fabric is available from wholesalers online at reasonable cost (the whole was about £100).

Sundry fittings – eyelets – Velcro etc add about £30. If you do not fancy the DIY project, any decent sailmaker (or some upholsterers etc) could easily do the job (can be a bit pricey though). Much of the time is in measuring and marking fabric for each of the three sections.

Method

A robust sewing machine and workspace are the chief requirements. An ancient Jones semi-industrial portable is my little workhorse (see photo) - adequate for heavy canvas etc (these can be picked up at surprisingly low cost on eBay etc from reputable dealers – from around £50 – even cheaper from private sellers. I have used this one (bought on eBay for £60) for

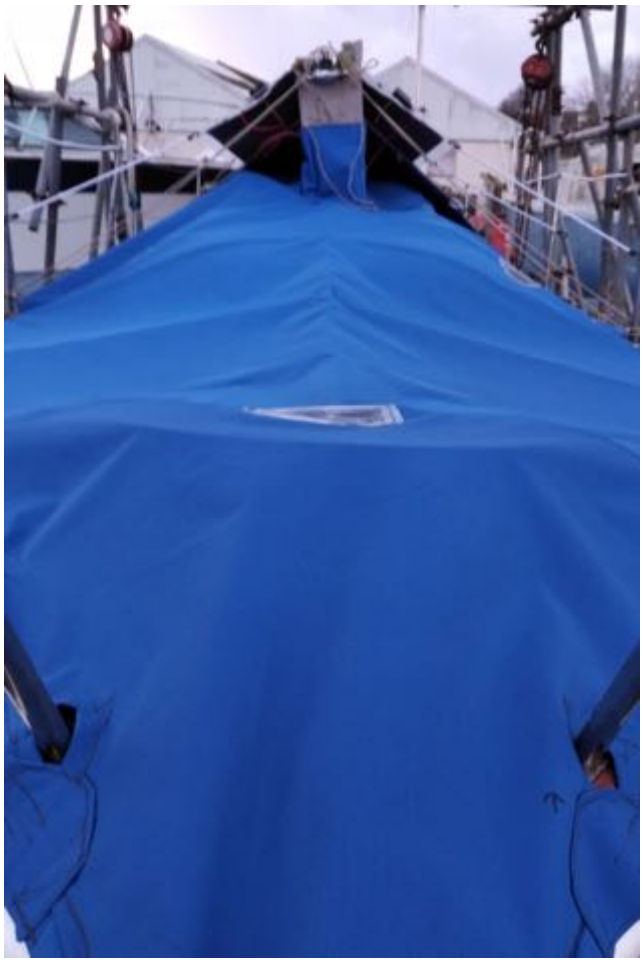
The front of the cover

The aft end of the cover

several years - almost exclusively for waxed canvas boat projects, with no issues, save for replacing a worn footplate - replaceable parts are available for these machines. The fabric was cut to basic size for the three cover sections and brought on board (in fine weather) to be marked precisely as required. Tailor's chalk is useful for marking the cut-outs etc - i.e. without leaving permanent marks. The mast wrap-around/gaiter (part of the front section) was made separately and sewn on afterwards.

As the cover is in three section, each one is quite manageable. The centre section is simple. It extends the length of the cockpit (over the boom) at a height which allows the boom to be parallel to the deck. For A169 this is about 300mm above the blister. So, the whole (i.e. the cockpit cover) is about 2.5 metres. This may also be used as a Bimini/tent; i.e. with the boom raised and cover outboard eyelets attached to top lifelines. NB: A169's sliding gooseneck set-up for the cockpit tent allows the boom to remain parallel. With a fixed gooseneck it could still be used as Bimini by use of the topping-lift – I had this arrangement on A100 and it worked OK, but of course the raised position without the sliding gooseneck is not parallel to the deck.

Maximum width (i.e. beam) of the forward and aft sections is under 2 metres; The centre cockpit cover overhangs the fore and aft sections and is attached with eyelet tabs and bungee ties - a gap of about 200mm at the apex allows ventilation. NB: Velcro will also work, but I prefer the eyelet method for the main attachments. Velcro was used for a fly tab over the two-way access zip in the aft section, for the centre seam join above the companionway hatch, and for some of the openings at the deck edge around cleats etc. Otherwise, edges are secured to stainless steel lacing hooks and 6mm yacht braid passed through eyelets on the cover – except for the bow section where the



The forehatch open under the cover

pulpit area is secured with eyelet tabs (sewn below the edging) and bungee ties directly to the toe rail. NB: The tabs around the fairleads to the transom are fastened by turn-buttons – seen in aft section photo.

Cockpit Tent

The only other construction element was adding pockets for a small area of FG tentpole framing over the foredeck. It comprises a 2 metre section between the mast and forehatch with two side poles (about 90cm each). These are the small folding type tent poles with ferrules and bungee cord sold as spare tent-pole kits – you can just cut these to whatever size you need. This was to prevent a flat/sagging area on the foredeck; to allow air to circulate with the forehatch left slightly open. You can see the frame (just) and the open hatch in the photo from the bow. NB: The only photo after this was completed.

A few days after installing the cover an extreme test was provided by 50+ mph winds and monsoon level rain. I was wondering if all would be well on the boat after finding wheelie bins scattered around and the garden side access gate, blown off its bottom hinge and horizontal in the frame!

It was a relief therefore to see that the deck cover was still in place. The adjacent heavy tarp covering the mast alongside the boat was another story, having been lifted off and pulled the mast off the trestles - thankfully no damage to the newly restored mast.

Canvas Cockpit tent

The cockpit cover I made last year (above) is described in an AOA blog found by following this link: https://atalantaowners.org/a169-kerry-piper-cockpit-tent-mast-boom-issues/

Chutzpah by Mike Dixon

The Cutty Sark Tall Ship's Race had started in Aberdeen where I had been responsible for the 140 or so strong liaison team. As soon as the race had sailed, we set off across the North Sea to Stavanger in Norway. It was an uneventful crossing and we arrived in Stavanger in plenty of time before the race fleet arrived.

Over the coming days, whilst we explored the surrounding islands and fjords, the ships arrived. The authorities then closed off the area in which the tall ships had assembled and posted a guard boat so that mere mortals couldn't get anywhere near the ships.

We had other ideas. We dressed overall, donned the official T shirts and then rigged our piece de resistance – the official large yellow name board – and motored into the basin where the tall ships were moored, exchanging waves with the crew aboard the guard boat as we went by.

Thus it was, that a 26 ft. Titania became the smallest "tall ship" to moor up amongst the square riggers.

East Coast Cruise in Company, Race and Rally

by Nick Phillips

After the rain - Brightlingsea

A short cruise in company was planned to bridge the weekends of the AOA60 celebrations at Suffolk Yacht Harbour and the East Coast race at West Mersea. In the event Atalanta Mary (Alistair Rodger and Bernard Marshall) and Helene (Nick Phillips) left on the grey and damp Wednesday morning. We were looking forward to the promised improving weather and to meeting up with Hans-Erich Viet (owner of A95 Hiran and A112 Trientje P) who was motorcycling from Germany to join us that day. We motored past Harwich and Hans-Erich's recently arrived ferry around 8am with plans to meet him at Brightlingsea that afternoon.

The passage that followed was wet. Very wet. We had a good breeze broad-reaching between the Wallet and the land but with persistent rain for the whole passage. Helene had been in the water only a week and Atalanta Mary since the beginning of the season. The difference in progress caused by Mary's hull-growth was immediately obvious and Helene's track would have been amusing to plot as she looped her way down the coast to keep in company with Mary.

After a stiff beat from the Colne Bar up to Brightlingsea the sun was at last breaking through and we could take off our wet gear and dry the sails. Hans-Erich was there to welcome us as we tied up. And more importantly to provide a reason to break out the beer.

With mid-day tides next day we headed up-river (The Colne) to visit the pub at Rowhedge. The wind was a very gentle southerly and Atalanta Mary motored. On Helene we decided to accept a slow rate of progress running up under Genoa. We got to the

Hans-Erick at Rowhedge

Nick, Bernard and Alistair

pub too late for lunch ashore but despite this Hans-Erich was very impressed with being able to sail from the sea and pull up at a pub!

We had a delightful beat down river with the tide, returning to Brightlingsea. The next day we completed the journey to Mersea by the afternoon, where we found Dervorguila who had sailed down from Harwich that morning. Mike Dixon joined us by road and we all ate ashore.

The East Coast Race 2018
Race day was sunny with a gentle breeze. We all left the piles well before low water to avoid unwelcome interaction with the Mersea mud and picked up moorings in the Quarters for last minute race preparation. Dervorguila had left the Dinky on the piles. It was great to see her sailing again. On Helene preparations included Hans-Erich's secret weapon - McVities plain chocolate digestives!
The growing breeze was roughly South East and the course set was to take us first to the East of the start and then up river to the West, criss-crossing the channel before re-crossing the line West to East.

Dervorguila got a good start crossing the extreme windward end of the line very shortly after the gun. Helene crossed in the same place a minute or so later and Atalanta Mary a few minutes after that. Helene then found her 'groove' and stormed past Dervorguila to windward before the two boats settled into a formation close-reaching a few boat lengths apart.

They continued like this towards the first mark as the tide turned foul. Different approaches to the tack south across the river then proved decisive. Helene chose to stand on much further than Dervorguila which turned out to be a lucky tactic. Dervorguila was swept away from the mark by the tide they had to sail back to it against the tide. The gap created was then magnified as Helene rounded the next mark and picked up the growing flood tide which Dervorguila and Atalanta Mary were

Waiting for the Race

A124 Overtakes

still punching.

We all had a fine sail with the tide to the Bradwell power station and then across the river before turning East again to cross the finish line. By the time we got to the penultimate mark the three Atalantas were in their traditional places at the back of the fleet and in the end Helene crossed the line just within the race time limit (two and half hours of the first boat in the Regatta fleet to finish).

It had been a great sail and we returned to the piles for post-race reviews and beer, heading ashore late afternoon for food and the prize-giving. This year we broke with tradition and joined the Town Regatta prize-giving on the waterfront in the evening. Previously the AOA had always had a private supper, famously at the Odling's 'Gun House' and more recently in the Scout Hut through the efforts of Mike and Sara Thorley. It was fun to be part of the Regatta festivities but I suspect some missed the fish and chips and AOA-focussed camaraderie of the Scout Hut. And of course we finished the evening enjoying the excellent firework display on the Hard.

East Coast Race 2019

The East Coast Race next year will be held as part of West Mersea Regatta on 17 August 2019. Following the success of this year's event, it is planned to have another get-together in Suffolk for people to attend by car and boat the week before the race, then cruise in company down to West Mersea. We hope the star of the show will be A1 Atalanta in her first season on the water with Mike Dixon at the helm. Other boats should include A16, A89, A102 and A124.

Come and join the fun!

Bernard sports his AOA60 sweatshirt!

Atalanta A35

by Richard James

A35 left the Fairey Marine factory in Hamble on 29 August 1957. She was hull number 35 and sail no A35.

She was named Christian Mary, fitted with a ¾ rig and a Coventry Victor engine. She was bought by Lord Stanley and registered ON 300442 in the Registrar's Office at Southampton.

She was sold to Monsieur E. George Gaisse of Brussels in February 1959. The broker for Lord Stanley was Colonel Bradshaw of Clock Tower Buildings, Warsash, Southampton. Mr Gaisse's broker was Bristol Marine and Yacht Brokers, Ltd. 59 Queen Square, Bristol.

She was sold in 1964 to George Leroux of Brussels.

She was sold in 1971 to Isabelle Van den Blotch, also of Brussels and renamed " Barrel".

She was sold in 1979 to Bernard Blavier of 60150 Thourotte, in north East France, near the Belgium border. She was sailed on the River Oise near Compeigne.

She then travelled to the River Somme and arrived at the English Channel via St Valery sur Somme.

She sailed in the Cherbourg Race in July 1987.

She was put up for sale on 31 July 1991. In Sep 1992, the AOA heard through Charles Currey that she had been re-named "Scherzo" and sold to Base Sous-Marine in Bordeaux, France.

The AOA then heard from Honorary Member Bernard Upton, who lived in France, that he had visited the Bordeaux submarine pens and seen A35 there.

On 15 June 1998, George Gaisse (owner 1959-1964) received a letter from Le Conservatoire de Plaisance base Sous-Marine in Bordeaux stating that they had conducted important repairs to "Scherzo".

The boat was last seen at Le Conservatoire de Plaisance, Bordeaux in 1992.

This video from 1993 includes a brief view of A35 at time 3:08 http://www.ina.fr/video/RXC08028733

If anyone has any more information about A35 Scherzo, please contact the AOA.

A169 (renamed Elle) – wind and solar project

by Chris Green

Following the beastly spring weather, July had been set aside for epoxy cloth sheathing below the waterline and rebuilding the ovoid wood mast. The problem was that during the extended heatwave even slow-cure epoxy resin when used for a few minor jobs was curing in about 5 minutes! It was therefore not possible to mix the larger amounts required for laminating etc until heat and humidity were reduced. Even deck painting proved impossible with paint turning gloopy in the morning dew; streaks and runs down newly painted topsides/varnished strake, which baked rock hard as soon as the sun came up. Half a day's work just to restore order. Consequently, it was the end of August before mast and boom rebuilds (see the other article) were possible. Meanwhile, the wind generator and solar panel installations were completed.

Supporting the base of the mast

Wind Generator

The generator is an iSTA-Breeze 200 – (200W/12V). Ostensibly, these are semi commercial, but there are many marine installations, with a good track record and a specification exceeding more expensive marine versions. The unit required the fitting of the blades and construction of a custom mast. The version used 42mm two-part ss mast above deck (2.2m). The removable mast is joined with an internal welded ferrule of 38mm ss, so when 2 securing screws are released, the two 1.1m sections are easily stowed. This was all made up from 2mm A4 SS milled blanks cut to

ISA Breeze 200 wind generator

Deck Support

length. A permanent 70cm lower part in 38mm ss is mounted through the deck and supported on an internally mounted bracket bolted through the transom (see photo for detail). The mast above deck slides over the permanent through-deck lower part which can be used as a danbuoy holder when the wind charger is not deployed. Cables from the generator pass below through the mast and are joined with standard quick-release solar connectors.

The idea is that the generator can be removed for longer passages under sail and deployed on moorings etc. The generator has proven to be durable; smooth in operation even at high wind speed; it has an internal regulator which trips a brake to prevent overcharging – this comes into play when there is insufficient battery capacity to accept the output. The generator has been very effective and compliments solar panel installation (below) to make the boat self-sufficient for all charging needs.

Solar Panels

I opted for “Fuji Wave” flexible panels rated at 1000V / 100W; these deliver a high voltage with exceptional low light energy capture. Construction is of tough polymer plastic. Each panel rolls-up like a carpet runner into a diameter of about 25cm; weighs about 1.5kg including wiring and connectors, and is easily

Deck Socket

stowed. Designed for commercial solar array installations, the panels are readily adaptable to boats, motorhomes etc. NB: Panels come without wiring, so this needs to be sorted to prepare for use. All required elements are standard solar kit; a solar junction box for the "+" and "-" terminals at each end of the panel; output solar cables run from each end. A regulator/controller is needed (see photo) to reduce output voltage as required, 48V here (this box is also available for 24V). These are supplied by the Dutch chap (Viktors) who sells the Fuji panels on eBay. Complete gubbins (per panel) comes in at under £100 (excluding controller/ regulator). You can of course obtain voltage converters for any DC configuration.

Flexible Panel

Solar controller

Useful for an Atalanta is that the Fuji Wave panel length (3.45 metres) fits the boom with a few inches to spare at each end; ergo, deployable on/over the boom; cockpit tent /cover etc when at anchor / mooring etc; or, the winter cover when laid-up (see photos). For use under sail - various options, i.e. attaching eyelets to lifelines etc. NB: I have used brass spur type eyelets for boat cover/ cockpit tent and solar panels. They are a little more expensive, but very durable.

A single panel was installed in early spring, since when no shore power has been required to maintain the battery bank (see photo -over cockpit tent). Mid-afternoon March measured input was 300V+(meter max reading is 300V). Although the current is minute (0.1 amp at 1000V) before passing through the regulator - 2 amps max at 48V), you can get a serious jolt if terminals are handled when the panel is in daylight – theory inadvertently tested when installing the deck glands!

In September a second panel was added, connected in parallel to the existing one; a simple job - 2 into 1 solar cable connectors at the pos and neg terminals (i.e. at each end of the panels). This increases max solar output to 4 amps (at 48V); wind/ solar (max) charging capacity for the 48V battery bank is 400W.

Elecrical switchgear

Drive Motor

Electric Motor – set-up

Wind generator and solar panels do a great job of maintaining the 48V battery bank; 12 x 75 a/h 12V Deep Cycle (sealed) leisure batteries. Photos show: Lynch (7.5) kw marine motor; battery bank; controller circuit and motor operation panel. The Alltrax controller is a US component, used extensively on electric vehicles; easily set to the power curve of the Lynch motor. Circuit includes massive relay switch/ breakers for on/off and ahead/astern control. The purpose of the controller is to allow a low voltage circuit to control the switch gear.

Why bother?

It may all seem a lot of trouble, but the benefits (in my opinion anyway) are worth it. Instant power ahead /astern control with massive torque when you need it – such as maneuvering into a tight berth; silent running; no diesel fuel or tankage; no through hull engine seacock; no exhaust pipe through aft cabin; better weight distribution – i.e. battery bank located in forward engine bay below w/l. Overall, at present, the net weight differential between this electric motor and a small diesel like the Yanmar or Mitsubishi 1 litre versions is +/- 20kg all-in. Looking ahead, batteries are getting cheaper/smaller as electric propulsion becomes the norm, so the next lot of batteries in a few years' time are likely to be lighter/cheaper and longer lasting.

Battery Bank

It will not suit anyone who needs to motor for hours, but with low setting the electric motor can be feathered at 20 – 30% power, extending the range comfortably over a couple of hours.

Control panel

Hooked!

by Mike Dixon

In June 1990, I became an Associate Member of the Association. A few weeks earlier I had come across A126 "Apple", ashore in the yard of the local yacht club in Stonehaven. I was fascinated and wanted to find out more. David, "Apple's" owner, told me about the Association and patiently answered my questions about the Atalanta family.

I contacted the then Hon Sec George Parker and by return of post (yes – the days of snail mail) had a copy of "The Short History……." It was eye-opening reading.

The only drawback I could see was the lack of headroom – but this could be overcome if one considered the Titania or the big sister, the 31. At this stage, I only had an inkling of what I wanted to do; I had grown weary of capsizing into the North Sea, and craved something larger. I clearly needed to find out more.

A few weeks later, there was a small ad. in Practical Boat Owner – a Titania offered for sale in Cumbria. I rang the 'phone number and arranged a visit. It was a long way to travel on spec, but it wasn't far from where my parents lived in the South Lakes. The owner wanted to keep the boat's name for himself, so I had to come up with a new name – and this is how my boat came to be called "Gellie".

gailey ['gele, 'gɛle]
n. A galley, ship. A garret, an out-house where male farm-servants sleep. A dirty or untidy house or room. A room where odds and ends are kept. I.Sh. A replica Viking ship built for Up-helly-aa.

dim. gellie

And the rest – they say – is history!

Gellie on her way to Stonehaven 1991

2018 Clipper Round the World Race
Ocean Yachtmaster sails an Atalanta.

A89 Colchide on the River Orwell

The photos show Anna Beyer sailing A89 COLCHIDE in early August 2018 on the River Orwell.

Ocean Yachtmaster Anna had just returned from sailing 28,000 miles as First Mate in the 2018 Clipper Round the World Race. She found helming and crewing A89 Colchide "very interesting".

In the Clipper Race, her crew averaged over 15 kts every 24 hours a day, over 6 months. Their highest windspeed recorded was 72 kts, when they had 2 reefs in the mainsail and only the second smallest genoa!

Anna Beyer

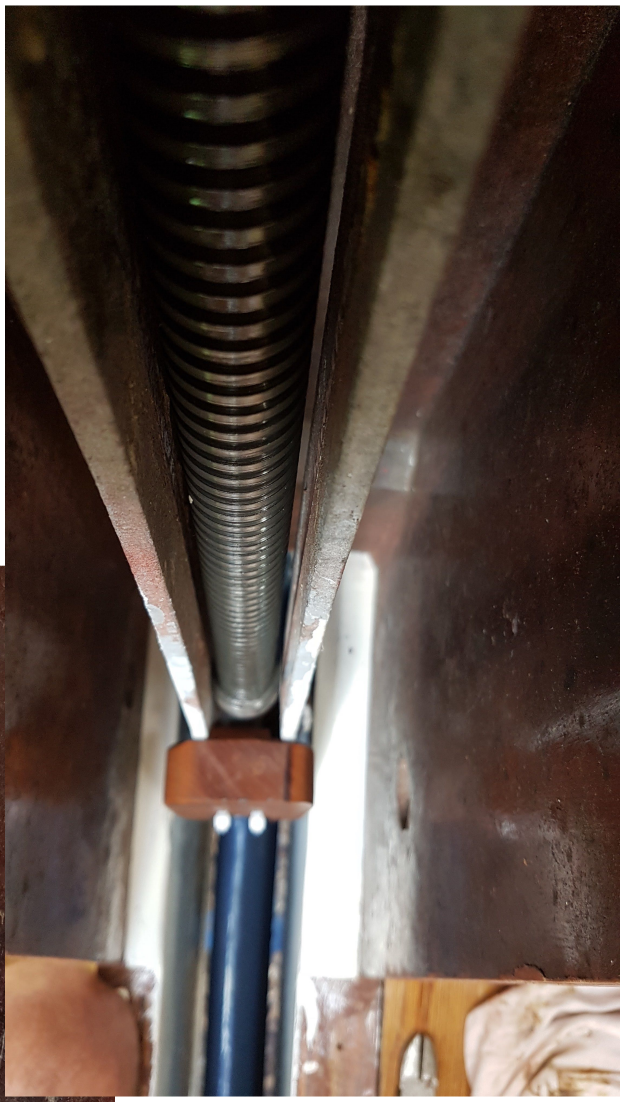
Anna had taken her Yachtmaster Course a few years previously, with Richard's friend, RYA Yachtmaster Instructor Derek Watson.

Stirrup Bolts - An Alternative solution

by Nick Phillips

Colin Twyford proposed a solution in the 2008-2009 Bulletin to prevent damage to the keel boxes caused by the heads of the bolts holding the keel stirrup sides together.

This article later became Technical Paper W. I planned to implement this modification when I removed the keels last year. However keel removal didn't make it to the top of the list and as I prepared for launch I put my mind to how I could achieve protection for the box sides without removing any metalwork.



The Block in the Box

Block cable tied in place

The solution I came up with is based on a wooden block, shaped to be held between the two sides of the stirrup. Holes are drilled in the block just above and just below the position of the bolt holding the stirrup sides together and cable ties passed through and around the bolt. The block should protrude only just enough to prevent the bolt contacting the box and has rounded corners.

The solution is not ideal, and next time the keels are out I will implement Colin's solution, but it will do for now.

The Shaped Block

A93? - QUO VADIS

by Richard James

Almost every Atalanta and Fairey derivatives sold by Fairey Marine have full entries and chronological details in the AOA Register. One notable exception is A93.

The AOA Register records that A93, with hull number 86, was sold on 28 August 1958 to Varia Lintadid of Lisbon, Portugal, for re-sale in Portugal. She was bought by J Carvalho e Silva who lived in Lisbon.

In 1963, Bernard Upton was touring Portugal and took the 2 photos on the right. His comments on the reverse of the photos was "Semi abandoned Atalanta in Lisbon, 1963".

Quo Vadis is Latin for "Where are you going"?

A.N.L. are the initials of the Lisbon Sailing Club - Associação Naval de Lisboa.

Founded in 1856, Associação Naval de Lisboa is the oldest sporting club in Portugal and one of the 30 oldest yacht clubs in Europe.

The last entry in the AOA Register states that in November 1976, she was seen by Mr L Coates, owner of A20, in Vilamoura Marina, on the Algarve, some 140 nm south of Lisbon.

A 1995 census in the AOA Register states that only one boat was ever sent to Portugal.

The AOA Sec has emailed the ANL and Vilamoura Marina, but not received a reply.

We will never be sure, but on the balance of probabilities, A93 might be Quo Vadis.